

**Testimony of  
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25X'25 RENEWABLE ENERGY ALLIANCE**

**Hearing on  
Montana House Joint Resolution 6  
Endorsing the 25x'25 Vision**

*By the year 2025, America's farms, ranches and forests will provide 25 percent of the total energy consumed in the United States from renewable sources, while continuing to produce safe, abundant and affordable supplies of food, feed, and fiber.*

*Helena, MT  
January 24, 2007*

Good afternoon, Chairman Olson and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the nearly four hundred organizations that comprise the 25x'25 Renewable Energy Alliance.

My name is Peggy Beltrone, in addition to being a Cascade County Commissioner, my work in wind energy promotion and concern for our struggling rural communities led to my invitation to serve as a member of the 25x'25 National Steering Committee.

Today I ask for your support of a vision we champion for Rural America.

**The Challenge and Need for New Energy Solutions**

As you well know, our nation and the world are searching for new energy solutions. Oil reserves are limited and are located in politically volatile parts of the world; population growth and economic growth, especially in India and China, will place more demands on limited energy supplies. At the same time, our nation is becoming increasingly dependent on foreign oil, making up 1/3 of our \$750 billion trade deficit, directly compromising national security. The cost of oil has skyrocketed over the past three years, and the price of natural gas has fluctuated wildly, creating major economic challenges for the nation and for agriculture. Beyond these concerns, the burning of fossil fuels is harming air quality and resulting in the release of greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere.

Americans are confronting one of their biggest challenges in decades. We cannot continue on the path of what some have called "yesterday forever." As energy demands increase, both here and abroad, we will need to come up with additional energy supplies – ones that are sustainable. Instead of importing oil from the Middle East, we can produce more energy here at home, using America's agriculture and forestry lands for fuel as well as food, feed and fiber.

## **Origins of 25x'25**

At the core of 25x'25 is a group of highly respected agriculture leaders who came together two and one-half years ago at the invitation of the Energy Future Coalition to explore agriculture and forestry's role in helping the nation meet its energy needs going forward. They quickly became convinced that America's farms, ranches and forests could become suppliers for a new generation of clean, alternative fuels and energy feedstocks. At the same time, this would contribute to a cleaner environment and enhanced rural economic development. As a result, we adopted a simple, but bold goal: 25x'25. By the year 2025, America's farms, ranches and forests will provide 25 percent of the total energy consumed in the United States from renewable sources, while continuing to produce safe, abundant and affordable supplies of food, feed, and fiber. This goal will be met by producing bio-based fuels for transportation, harnessing wind energy, capturing and converting sunlight into energy, converting agricultural wastes and by-products into energy sources, and growing biomass for energy production.

Our vision is a food, feed, fiber and fuel vision. With emerging technologies and appropriate policies, agriculture can produce multiple commodities.

Today, nearly 400 organizations have committed to the goal of 25x'25. They are joined by 22 current and former governors, 4 state legislatures, 30 current and former Senators, including many Members of this Committee, and 94 current and former Representatives – all of whom have signed on in bipartisan support of a 25x'25 energy future. We represent a diverse collection of endorsing partners, ranging from the American Farm Bureau Federation and the National Farmers Union to the Natural Resources Defense Council and Environmental Defense. The 25x'25 vision has been endorsed by the “Big 3” U.S. automobile manufacturers, Deere & Company, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, and the National Wildlife Federation. In addition, most of the major commodity organizations and most of the major renewable energy trade associations, such as the American Wind Energy Association, have endorsed 25x'25. We also include among our ranks the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Renewable Fuels Association, the National Biodiesel Board and the Biotechnology Industry Organization. These organizations, along with hundreds of others, agreed to join the 25x'25 Alliance because they believe in the vision and want to work collaboratively to bring the goal of 25x'25 to life.

## **Benefits of a 25x'25 Energy Future**

25x'25 is good not only for national security and the economy – it is also good for agriculture, forestry and the environment. A 25x'25 energy future will generate increased farm income, stimulate rural development, and help improve air, water and soil quality. It will also result in improvements in wildlife habitat and conservation on cropland, range and pasturelands.

Last year, in an effort to quantify the economic benefits that 25x'25 would have on the agricultural sector and the economy, we commissioned a major analysis conducted by a

## **Path to 25x'25**

The 25x'25 partners are now working to construct a road map to achieve 25x'25. Over the past six months, representatives from the endorsing entities have been meeting jointly and in working groups to develop a detailed 25x'25 Implementation Plan which will include policy recommendations to achieve this goal. It will be complete in three weeks. The 25x'25 goal and Implementation Plan stand on a foundation of five key principles.

- **Partnership** – No one region or player can, by itself, achieve the 25x'25 goal. It must be built on partnerships among many diverse stakeholders.
- **Commitment** – Decision makers must maintain a commitment to renewable energy **over a long period of time** to create the right policy environment and market circumstances for its success.
- **Sustainability** – To be a long-term solution for America, renewable energy production must conserve, enhance, and protect all natural resources and be environmentally sound, economically viable and socially acceptable.
- **Efficiency** – An efficient energy system will make it easier to achieve the 25x'25 goal and strengthen our economy, security, and environment. Significant energy efficiency improvements are possible and necessary to reduce total energy demand and help reach the 25x'25 goal.
- **Opportunity** – The opportunities for renewable energy are ubiquitous – every region of the United States has the potential to produce and benefit from renewable energy. Seizing those opportunities will enhance:
  - Economic growth by expanding rural development, creating new jobs, and reducing consumer energy costs;
  - National security by reducing dependence on oil, and
  - Environmental protection by expanding wildlife habitat, and improving soil, water and air quality.

## **Taking the First Step**

The first step to achieving a 25x'25 energy future is to establish 25x'25 as a national goal. The 25x'25 resolution is currently making its way through the Congress. By supporting 25x'25 as a national goal, the Montana Legislature will join our Congressional delegation and Governor and send a clear and powerful message that clean, renewable energy will define America's energy future.

American agriculture is uniquely positioned to play a major role in improving energy and national security, strengthening the national and rural economies, and improving the environment.